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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001271

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DOD FOR OSD/APSA SHINN/SEDNEY/HILL

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY MEETS WITH JAPANESE DEFENSE
MINISTER ISHIBA

Classified By: Deputy Secretary John Negroponte, for reasons
1.4(b)/(d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a May 9 meeting with the Deputy Secretary, Minister of Defense Shigeru Ishiba emphasized that Japan remains committed to cooperating with the United States on a wide range of issues, including aid to Afghanistan, China's military buildup, and the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan. Ishiba noted, however, that any Japanese participation in operations in Afghanistan requires considerable planning to address existing legal and political constraints. The Deputy Secretary expressed appreciation for continued Japanese refueling efforts in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and pledged to support the Japanese government's efforts in Afghanistan. Both officials agreed that Japan and the United States should continue to press China for greater transparency in its military modernization. On base realignment, Ishiba emphasized that Japan prioritizes both deterrent capabilities of the U.S. presence as well as the need to reduce the burden on local communities. END SUMMARY.

Realignment and the Alliance

12. (C) The Deputy Secretary said that the Alliance is the cornerstone of U.S. efforts in Asia and that both governments must remain committed to the realignment process as agreed. Ishiba asserted that maintaining current defense capabilities while reducing the burden on local communities is the Japanese government's overall goal for the realignment process as negotiated. The Japanese government has no desire to reduce the overall deterrent capability of U.S. forces in Japan and will continue to support the realignment process. Ishiba asked that the United States continue to emphasize the importance of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in light of the rising importance of China.

Afghanistan

13. (C) The Deputy Secretary thanked the Ministry of Defense (MOD) for its efforts to resume refueling operations in

support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Ishiba responded that the refueling operations are a part of Japan's responsibility to the international community. If Japan wants to be considered on equal footing with countries like the United Kingdom and France, Japan must participate in OEF, Ishiba said.

¶4. (C) Ishiba noted that the Japanese Defense Ministry is exploring additional activities to further coalition efforts in Afghanistan. Due to Japan's current political environment and legal constraints, broader Japanese participation in Afghanistan operations will need careful planning that considers both Japan's logistical capabilities and the needs of the Afghan government. Ishiba stated the three possible areas in which Japan can contribute are helicopter or fixed wing support, humanitarian assistance, and surveillance on the high seas. He also added that the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) expressed a desire to send a civilian humanitarian assistance team to Afghanistan, but the Japanese government has not yet planned for such an operation.

¶5. (C) Ishiba noted that moving forward on additional activities in Afghanistan requires government consensus, which did not yet exist. A meeting among Ishiba, FM Koumura and Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura next week will discuss possibilities. Responding to the Deputy Secretary's question, Ishiba said Japan has not dispatched an assessment team to Afghanistan, but will seek U.S. support when it does.

Chinese Military Buildup and President Hu Jintao

¶6. (C) Ishiba and the Deputy Secretary agreed that the rapid modernization of China's military is important to watch. The Deputy Secretary said China's rise is a fact that we have to deal with. Japan and the United States need to continue to press China to improve transparency in its defense procurement and policy objectives. Greater transparency in defense spending will help to build confidence by the international community. The Deputy Secretary said the United States will increase its cooperation with Japan to evaluate the Chinese military.

¶7. (C) When asked about the defense aspects of the on-going visit by President Hu Jintao to Japan, Ishiba stated that Japan and China both avoided discussing history and other contentious bilateral issues. Both sides agreed to have further high-level exchanges, including a visit to China by Ishiba before the end of the year. Ishiba looked forward to discussions with the United States about China before his trip. The Deputy Secretary agreed the United States would discuss with Ishiba and the Defense Ministry issues relating to China's military modernization.

PARTICIPANTS

¶8. (SBU) U.S. Delegation:

- The Deputy Secretary
- Embassy Tokyo Charge d'Affaires Joe Donovan
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney
- USFJ Deputy Commander MajGen James Flock
- Special Assistant Kaye Lee
- Special Assistant Ted Wittenstein
- Embassy Tokyo Political Officer Christopher Gunning (notetaker)

¶9. (SBU) Japanese delegation:

- Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba

-- Director General, Defense Policy Bureau Nobushige
Takamizawa

-- Director, Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation Division Kiyoshi
Serizawa

¶10. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary's party has cleared this
cable.
DONOVAN